

Multi-purpose Kitchen Utensil

U.S. Patent Application of:

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Title of the Invention

Multi-purpose Kitchen Utensil

Cross Reference to Related Applications

Not Applicable

Statement Regarding Federally Sponsored Research or Development

Not Applicable

Description of Attached Appendix

Not Applicable

Background of the Invention

This invention relates generally to the field of kitchen utensils and more specifically to a multi-purpose kitchen utensil.

Utensils and tools that help facilitate cooking and related activities that take place in a standard kitchen or camp site, have been available in the market place for scores of years. Most people have at least a dozen kitchen tools stored in drawers, on counter tops and hanging from wall or ceiling hooks. Campers also must pack a collection of kitchen related tools when going for an extended trip. The common kitchen tools include knives, serving spoons, graters, can openers, bottle openers, vegetable peelers, cork screws, strainers measuring spoons and the like.

While all these tools perform their jobs adequately, they occupy a substantial amount of

storage space.

Additionally, they are expensive when purchased separately. Also, they are cumbersome and relatively heavy when taken as a collection of utensils. Finally, existing utensil designs are not designed to nest into one another so that they take up the minimum amount of space when stored collectively. Although Cynthia Simpson's patent number 4823419, now abandoned, describes a foldable, multi-purpose utensil, it does not include all the utensils that are commonly needed in a typical kitchen or camping trip. There is no provision for storing tools in the handle portion. Additionally, there is no provision for having the flat spatula member and spoon member to act together to be an efficient tongs because the curved spoon shape does not make adequate contact with the straight edged spatula. Additionally, there is no provision to have a nesting coffee making funnel or nesting salt and pepper shaker. Additionally, there is no provision for removing a tool head and replacing it with another tool head. Also, there is no provision for detaching the elastic cord that joins the handle halves together. Finally, there is no mention of a protective case for the device which can also act to removably retain additional kitchen utensils such as a basting brush or fork or salt and pepper shakers. Because of this, the user must have on hand additional utensils thereby increasing the storage space necessary to retain such utensils.

Brief Summary of the Invention

The primary object of the invention is to provide a kitchen utensil that combines many of the most common kitchen tools into a single device.

Another object of the invention is to provide a kitchen utensil that can fold for compact packaging and storage.

Another object of the invention is to provide a kitchen utensil that allows the user to unplug a utensil from its handle and replace it with another utensil.

Another object of the invention is to provide a kitchen utensil whose handle can separate at a central location so that utensils on each end of the handle can be used separately.

Another object of the invention is to provide a kitchen utensil that is light weight.

A further object of the invention is to provide a kitchen utensil that is easy to manufacture.

Other objects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following descriptions, taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, wherein, by way of illustration and example, an embodiment of the present invention is disclosed.

In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention, there is disclosed Multi-purpose Kitchen Utensil comprising: a flat spatula member that incorporates the elements of a standard spatula, a knife and a grater, a first and second pair of handle members releasably joined to each other at one end by a resilient cord, said first handle member terminating at its opposite end in a scoop member, said second handle member terminating at its opposite end in said flat spatula member, said handle member being foldable at said releasably joined junction so that said handles rest on top of each other and said flat stainless steel member rests intimately on the top perimeter of said scoop, and said first and second handle members having hollowed portions to allow for the storage of a plurality of kitchen tools . The scoop portion is removable and replaceable from said handle member so that additional tools can be

plugged into the socket in said handle member.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The drawings constitute a part of this specification and include exemplary embodiments to the invention, which may be embodied in various forms. It is to be understood that in some instances various aspects of the invention may be shown exaggerated or enlarged to facilitate an understanding of the invention.

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the invention showing multiple utensils

Figure 2 is a side view of the invention in its folded position

Figure 3 is a partial perspective view showing the cord connector

Figure 4 is a perspective view of the cork screw of the present invention

Figure 5 is an exploded view of the spring ball assembly

Figure 6 is a perspective view of the whisk attachment

Figure 7 is perspective view of the fork attachment

Figure 8 is a perspective view of the vegetable peeler of the invention

Figure 9 is an exploded view of the can opener portion of the invention

Figure 10 is a side section view of the can opener portion

Figure 11 is a perspective view of the baster portion attached to the spatula

Figure 12 is an exploded view of the nesting of the components that fit in the scoop of the invention

Figure 13 is a perspective view of the coffee maker portion in use

Figure 14 is a perspective view of the case of the invention shown the multi purpose kitchen tool inside

Figure 15 is a perspective view of the case in the closed position

Figure 16 is a perspective view of the tongs feature

Figure 17 is a perspective view of the scoop portion

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

Detailed descriptions of the preferred embodiment are provided herein. It is to be understood, however, that the present invention may be embodied in various forms. Therefore, specific details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as limiting, but rather as a basis for the claims and as a representative basis for teaching one skilled in the art to employ the present invention in virtually any appropriately detailed system, structure or manner.

Referring now to Figure 1 we see a perspective view of the present invention 100. Handle portions 14, 16 are releasably joined at one end 29 as will be described in more detail later. Handle 14 terminates at its opposite end in a removable, replaceable scoop tool 50 that includes a straight leading edge 8, a recessed portion 2 and a ladle type pouring portion 6. One wall of recessed portion 2 includes measuring lines 4 that allow the scoop 50 to be used as a measuring cup. This design allows the scoop 50 to also be used as a measuring cup and a ladle. Scoop 50 is made of molded plastic such as food grade nylon or polypropylene. Shank portion 10 removably inserts into a socket 11 located at the end of handle 14. Tabs 12 mate with square aperture 32 when the two handles are in the folded position as shown in Figure 2. The handle portions 14, 16 are recessed on their sides 23, 28, 41, 43 to allow storage of a bottle opener 22, a can opener 24 a cork removing tool 20 and a vegetable peeler 26. Handle 16 terminates at its opposite end in a spatula tool 40. Spatula shank 34 is permanently inserted into a recess located at the end of handle 16. Spatula 40 also includes a grater feature 36 and a serrated knife 38. Aperture 39 located at the front portion of

spatula 40 allows a basting brush to be removably attached as will be described later. Spatula 40 is made of stainless steel or other flat stamped and sharpened metal or high temperature molded plastic such as nylon or Ultem. Handle portions 14, 16 are made of molded plastic such as ABS and include molded rubber or rubber-like plastic inserts 15 that add to the comfort when gripping the handles. Figure 2 shows the present invention in its folded position. This folding feature allows the device of the present invention 100 to be stored in a compact manner. Also, in this configuration, the device 100 can be used as a strainer. For example, if a person scooped out cooked peas from a water filled pot using scoop 50, he or she could then trap the peas and water with the spatula portion 40 and , because the perimeter of the spatula 40 and the perimeter of the scoop 50 are similar in shape, the user can turn the assembly 100 upside down and drain the water out of grater apertures 36 without spilling the peas enclosed inside scoop 50. Elastic cord 60 helps keep handles 14, 16 together and acts as a flexible hinge. Cord 60 can be detached and reattached from handle 16 by removing plastic end piece 63 from retaining end piece 61 as is shown more clearly in Figure 3. Elastic cord 60 is retained at its opposite end within handle 14. Figure 4 shows handle 14 removed from handle 16 so that the device can be used as a cork removing tool. Cork screw 20 has been radially swung out from recess 41 by pivoting on post 49. Figure 4 also shows shank accepting aperture 11 more clearly. Scoop 50 as well as other utensils that will be described later are removably retained in handle 14 by use of spring 70 and ball 72 that snaps into an aperture 51 shown in Figure 17. Of course other known retaining means may be used. Figure 6 shows a whisk tool 300 made of a wire form 302 welded to a shank 304. Aperture 306 allows the whisk tool to be removably inserted into aperture 11 in handle 14 in a similar fashion as scoop portion

50. Whisk portion 302 is made of relatively heavy gauge wire so that can also be used as a potato masher. Figure 7 shows a fork utensil 130 made of stainless steel . Its shank 134 also includes an aperture 132 so that it can be removably inserted into aperture 11 of handle 14. By separating handle 14 from handle 16, the user can impale a food object such as a piece of meat, and use the serrated knife portion 38 of spatula tool 40 to cut said meat. Figure 8 shows vegetable peeler 26 pinned at swivel joint 129 and swung one hundred and eighty degrees out of recess 28 so that it may be used comfortably while gripping handle 14. Handles 14 and 16 have been separated for this application. Figure 9 shows can opener tool 25 after it has been removed from handle recess 43. Tool 25 can swivel about aperture 29 and be removed from handle 16 because handle 16 includes a spring biased 35 post 33, as shown in Figure 10, that allows can opener handle 27 to snap in and out. Referring back to Figure 9, pin 31 can be removed from handle portion 27 so that the can opener end 25A can be removed and turned one hundred and eighty degrees so that paring knife portion 25B is exposed. Pin 31 can be replaced so that knife portion 25B is secure. Of course, other known retaining means can be used instead of pin 31. Figure 11 shows a basting brush 500 removably attached to the end of spatula 40. Bristles 504 are captured by plastic portion 502. Plastic finger 504 snaps into aperture 39 so that the basting brush is removably secured. Figure 12 shows an exploded view of scoop 50, coffee maker assembly and salt and pepper containers 602, 604. The coffee maker assembly 600 includes a measuring spoon 608 that can measure a tablespoon and a teaspoon. Salt and pepper containers 604, 602 are shaped to slidably insert into the recess of coffee maker 600 and coffee maker 600 is shaped to slidably fit into the recess of scoop 50. Figure 13 shows coffee maker 600 in place on a coffee cup 618. The bottom 610 of

coffee maker 600 is made of a fine screen material so that coffee grounds are retained but hot water poured over the coffee grounds is allowed to pass through to the coffee cup below. Tab 612 helps hold the coffee maker 600 in place on one end, and the measuring spoon extension tab 609 holds the coffee maker 600 on the opposite end.

Figure 14 shows The invention 100 stored in a molded plastic container 700.

Accessories such as the baster 500, a match box 600, the fork attachment 130 and the whisk attachment 140 are also stored in that container 700. The container 700 includes a lid 702 that is hinged 703 and a cord holding tab 705 to hold hanging cord 710 as shown in Figure 15. Figure 16 shows handles 14, 16 attached by elastic cord 60.

Spatula portion 40 is reversed so that the device 100 can be used as a tongs. Because scoop edge 8 mates with spatula edge 47, items such as salad and the like can be easily picked up and served. Figure 17 is a perspective view of the scoop 50.

As the above description and drawings show, the present invention provides the storage and easy accessibility of plurality of commonly used kitchen utensils within a compact, versatile, novel configuration. Because many of the utensils of the present invention use a common handle, the resulting multi use invention is light weight and inexpensive to manufacture. As described above, the present invention can be used as a scoop, a ladle, a measuring cup, a measuring spoon, a serrated carving knife, a fork, a tongs, a strainer, a can opener, a paring knife, a bottle opener, a cork screw, a vegetable peeler, a whisk, a potato masher, a basting brush, a coffee maker, a grater, a spatula, a match box and a salt and pepper shaker.

While the invention has been described in connection with a preferred embodiment, it is not intended to limit the scope of the invention to the particular form set forth, but on the contrary, it is intended to cover such alternatives, modifications,

and equivalents as may be included within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.